(e) (i) Demand for this, low cost tobacco was increased on account of the preference given by the importers of Poland, Belgium and Russia, presumably for making low cost cigarettes.

(ii) Shortage of tobacco in Russia and non-availablity of sufficient foreign exchange reportedly led to import of these low cost tobaccos for mak'tip low cost cigarettes.

Export of Agricultural Products

1506. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to take any fresh steps to boost export of agriculture products like oil seedcakes fruits and vegetables products and milk products;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) the names of the countries to which these are likely to be exported; and

(d) what was the quantity and value of their exports during the last two years and the names of the countries to which these were exported ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CON SUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DIS TRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COM MERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (c) Steps taken to boost the exports of agricultural products include the enhanced Plan outlays in the VIIIth Plan for this sector, various con cessions given to this sector in the Budget of 1993-94, and the amendments in the Export and Import Policy 1992—97, ft is expected that this favourable environ ment would boost' agricultural exports to a level of US $ 2255 million in 1993-94 mainly to West Asia, EEC, East Asia and USA.

(d) The details of exports in 1990-91 and 1991-92 sought by the Hon'ble Member are available in the March 1991 and March 1992 issues of 'Foreign Trade Statistics of India—Principal Commodities and Countries' published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta, which are available in Parliament Library.

Restructuring of ITPO

1507. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to broad base the existing Board of Manage-ment|Directors of Indian Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO);

(b) what is the present structure of ITPO;

(c) whether it is a fact that a large amount of money has been spent on in-fructuous items like frequent foreign travel by certain top officials of ITPO ;

(d) whether the approval of his Ministry is required for such foreign travel;

(e) whether there is any move to rationalise and choose carefully the overseas trips to be undertaken by the Chairman; and

(f) whether a Vice-Chairman is proposed to be appointed in place of Chairman to officiate in his absence during such trips ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CON SUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DIS TRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COM MERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) ITPO is a company registered under section 25 of the Companies Act. It has a Board of Directors headed by Chairman-cum-Managing Director, which

can have maximum 12 and minimum 4 Directors.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) For foreign travel of Chairman ITPO, approval of Commerce Ministry is required;

(e) The tours are carefully selected and undertaken, depending upon the require ments, with the approval of Ministry of Commerce.

(f) No, Sir.

Colachal Port in Kanyakumari

@1508. SHRI S. AUSTIN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with the Government to make the Colachal Port in Kanyakumari as a Free Port as per the decision of the Exports Commit tee which visited the port recently ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and by when the decision will be announce ed; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CON SUMERS AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DIS TRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE. (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (c) The Free Port Advisory Committee has recommended the locat'on of a Free Port in Goa. Colachal in Tamilnadu is one of locations considered by the Ad visory Committee for this purpose. Inter-Ministerial and Inter-Governmental, con sultations on the report of the Committee are underway but no time frame can be indicated within which a decision is likely to be taken.

Export of Rice

1509. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleas ed to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Prime Minister has assured that Non-Basm.Ui rice will not be exported; and

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps to implement this decision ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CON SUMERS AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DIS TRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COM MERCE (SHRI KAMALUDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) Government has decided that only super fine varieties of non-basmati rice are allowed to be exported subject to Minimum Export Price of US $ 250 per Metric Tonne.

Lifting of minimum export price on rice exports

1510. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a | whether it is a fact that Government propose to lift the minimum export price (MEP) restrictions on rice exports; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CON SUMERS AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY. OF COM MERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Agricultural. Exports

1511. SHRI G. G. SWELL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

©Previously Unstarred Question 1263, transferred from the 5th May, 1993.